

CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS

Purpose

The purpose of the Governor's Committee is to foster partnerships to increase employment opportunities for Californians who have disabilities. As a public-private sector partnership of volunteers, the Committee advises the Governor's Office on various disability-related employment issues. It is unique because it also provides direct services, including technical assistance to employers and employees, development and dissemination of public education materials, formal recognition of outstanding contributions, and development and administration of special job-related programs.

Background

The California Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons was established in 1947 as the State affiliate of the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities. It is now affiliated with the National Association of Governor's Committees and with community mayor's committees throughout California.

The Committee is composed of volunteer members appointed by the Governor. Additional subcommittee members are appointed by the Chair and serve as Governor's Committee volunteer partners. Members represent business, labor, the professions, persons with disabilities, and concerned governmental agencies. Current officers are: Chair **Norman M. Owen**, Esq.; Vice Chair-North **Janice Emerzian**, Ed. D.; Vice Chair-South **Patricia Sieglen-Perry**; Treasurer **Don De Jesse**; Secretary/Historian **Kris Lange**; and Chair Emeritus **Harry Servidio**. The Executive Director, **Catherine Kelly Baird**, is selected by the Director of the State Employment Development Department (EDD) and the Chair of the Committee. EDD provides primary administrative support to the voluntary committee, with additional support provided by the State Departments of Rehabilitation, Developmental Services, and Mental Health.

Quarterly meetings are held in varying statewide locations to conduct Committee business and to exchange educational information. Meetings are organized around an educational theme and public participation is encouraged. The Committee functions as an effective model of a public-private partnership that benefits both employers and persons with disabilities.

Major Activities

The primary goal of the Governor's Committee is to promote the employment of Californians who have disabilities. To accomplish this objective, the Committee engages in a variety of activities and projects, including the following:

- **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS' COMMITTEES AND COMMUNITY MAYORS' COMMITTEES NETWORK.** Maintains a liaison with and supports the National Association of Governors' Committees and community mayors' committees on employment of people with disabilities.
- **ADVISER TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE.** As mandated by Executive Order, advises the Governor's Office on various issues that affect the employment of persons with disabilities, including legislation and public policy.
- **INFORMATION AND REFERRAL.** Provides information and referral services to employers, disabled job applicants, and various public and private agencies regarding disability and employment.
- **EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE.** Develops and distributes literature relating to the job abilities and job needs of persons with disabilities. Publications are distributed to the public at no charge. The Committee has developed a training program called "Windmills" geared toward eliminating attitudinal barriers to employment and coordinates a statewide media campaign each October for "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

- **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.** The Committee educates and works with employers, labor unions, public agencies, the general public, and private sector employers regarding the job needs, job abilities, and benefits of employing persons with disabilities. Special areas of expertise include knowledge of special job training programs, architectural access, and the appropriate use of disability terminology. The Committee also coordinates special projects with Employment Development Department field offices, State Department of Rehabilitation district offices, the Pacific Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center, the State Independent Living Council, and community job placement services. Implementation of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Act continue to be major technical assistance priorities.
- **YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM (YLF).** In 1992, the Committee held the first ever statewide Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities. This intensive career awareness and leadership development project is now an annual event. Additionally, the YLF is now being replicated in more than thirty states and Puerto Rico.
- **STATEWIDE ANNUAL AWARDS.** The Committee sponsors an annual awards program to promote best practices by acknowledging deserving individuals and companies who have contributed to the employment of people with disabilities.
- **MEDIA ACCESS OFFICE AND AWARDS.** At a national media access awards event held in the Hollywood community, the Committee acknowledges the media industry for hiring people with disabilities and accurately portraying persons with disabilities in the media. Additionally, the Committee oversees the Media Access Office in Hollywood in partnership with EDD's Job Service Branch and other volunteers. This project provides a variety of special media-related services, including acting classes for disabled performers, training workshops, scholarships, and assistance with casting/placement services.
- **SPECIAL PROJECTS.** The Governor's Committee develops many innovative special projects funded by private donations to support its general goals. Examples include the "Hal Connolly Scholar-Athlete Award," which provides cash grants to high school senior girls and boys with disabilities who are competitively involved in athletics and plan to attend college, and the Governor's Committee's College Scholarship for Students With Learning Disabilities.

Subcommittees

To accomplish its goals, the Governor's Committee is organized into subcommittees. Each is responsible for various activities and special projects. The public is eligible to apply for subcommittee membership. The standing subcommittees reflect the wide range of Committee activities and include the following:

- Affiliated Community Mayors' Committees
- Outreach (includes Annual Awards Task Force, Marketing Task Force, and Publications Service Task Force)
- Youth (includes Youth Leadership Forum Task Force, Hal Connolly Scholar-Athlete Award Task Force, and Learning Disability College Scholarship Task Force)
- Media Access Office and Awards
- Workforce Investment/Employer (includes California Business Leadership Network Task Force)
- Membership

The Chair may appoint additional task forces within subcommittees to develop and carry out specific projects.

Friends of the California Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons, Inc.

The Friends of the California Governor's Committee, Inc., is a nonprofit, 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization established exclusively to raise private monies to support the Committee's special projects and scholarships. The officers of the Governor's Committee concurrently serve as the officers of Friends, Inc. (Employer Tax I.D. #68-0239433).

The California Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons is a catalyst bringing together diverse groups to work on issues of mutual concern. The Committee continues to improve its commitment as a facilitator promoting effective public-private partnership. The Committee is dedicated to eliminating the barriers which preclude equal consideration for employment opportunities for people with disabilities. We welcome your interest and participation.

For additional information, please visit the Governor's Committee Web site at www.disabilityemployment.org.